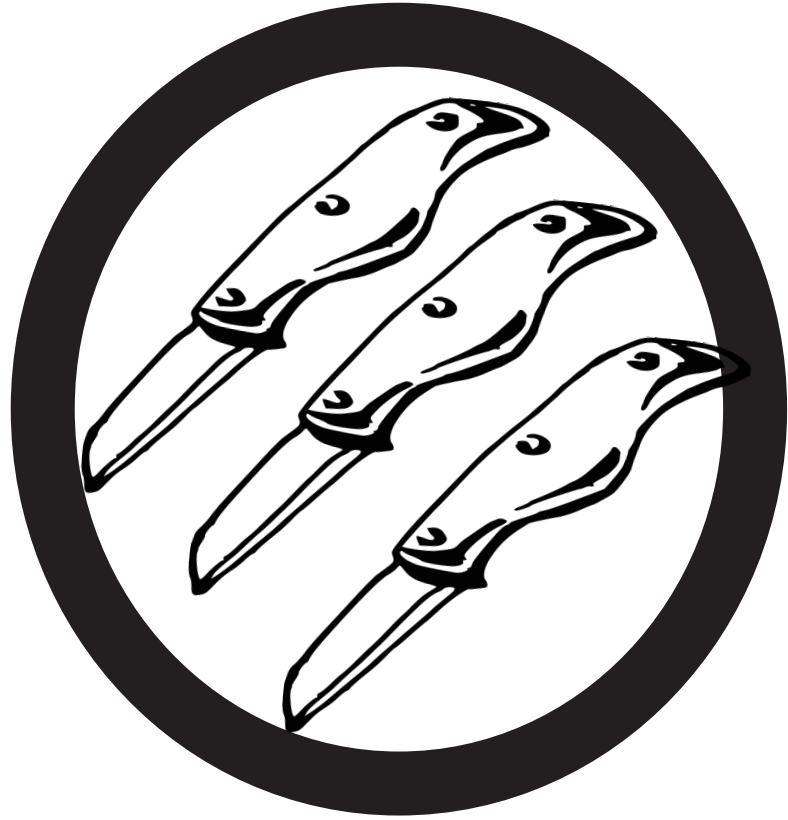


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SOME NOTES ON ANTIFASCISM



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Let these words embolden and sharpen our struggles against fascism and the democracy that enables it.

** by Lucha No Feik*

*** by members of Philly Antifa & NYC Antifa*

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ON ANTIFA: SOME CRITICAL NOTES

Presented as a personal, good faith critique of antifa and not merely an anti-political purist attack, in light of the current moment. Note: this is speaking from a non-European context.

1: Antifa is essentially limited by being mostly just anti-fascism (or to a degree somewhat against white-supremacy) but antifa usually stops short of being actually radical or revolutionary (explained below). Antifa acts a wall (“¡no pasarán!”) where as revolt is a bulldozer. As an anarchist I am not interested in just stopping the current tide but creating a whole new wave.

2: Antifa in Los Angeles (& in its vicinity) from what I have seen has been a mostly white subculture, where white Leftists can express their anti-racist-ness instead of an embodying an actual (anti)political force. They show up to nazi rallies but not much else. I did read somewhere that a NYC antifa group once drove

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5) We don't mind critiques of our movement—criticisms help reveal our shortcomings and challenge us to do better—but we do ask critics to learn a little more about what it is they are criticizing. There are several good blogs to read and many groups that can be contacted in order to become more informed.

We don't doubt the author of "On Antifa" has met some people who call themselves anti-fascists and who have the beliefs that are described in the essay; we do, however, very strongly object to this critique passing itself off as representative of the U.S. anti-fascist movement as a whole.

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3: A united front against fascism has never really worked out well for those of us who want to destroy more than just fascism. Our desires to do more than destroy, and/or prevent fascism, find themselves indefinitely tabled. Antifa is not a political project and has no real political content beyond "let's beat up racists." I do see now an attempt to extend the project of antifa beyond this historical limit point but instead of attempting to extend the project I would rather further other actual radical projects.

4: Anti-fascism tends to point to a return to a less-racist status quo but usually does not look at structural things deeply enough to understand that to be against white-supremacy would include being against the USA as a colonial nation-state. Antifa sees trees where there is indeed a forest; in that they view the enemy as an individual (i.e. Trump) or groupings of Nazis or other racist white-nationalists instead of analyzing the structural nature of our

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racist society. This is an analysis that is but a few steps removed from the Liberal position that we should just all get along.

5: Antifa often bases itself in a type of good vs. evil moralism which assume being against white-supremacy or racism is a purely personal choice made by good people, thus once again obscuring structural and impersonal white-supremacy. Antifa often makes appeals to "duty" as its motive, instead of self-defense or something else (though now the language has shifted toward self-defense). This likely speaks to the historical mostly white makeup of antifa.

6 : To describe every material action against racists and/or white nationalists as antifa, as some in antifa do, is to erase the resistance and revolt of those who are not antifa but something all their own.

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Anti-fascist work is a bulwark against the most ideologically reactionary forms of the Far Right. This work is particularly important when fascists come into radical circles to cross-recruit and gain dominance; for example, we see this activity in the radical environmental and animal rights groups, music subcultures, and soccer supporters clubs. At other times, some Far Right groups position themselves as an independent revolutionary force against the neoliberal state, and try to recruit disenchanted people into their ranks (known as the "Three Way Fight" perspective).

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4) On a political level, anti-fascism has (until recently) been something of a behind-the-scenes practice. While many different kinds of groups across the political spectrum work to monitor and counter the influence of the Far Right, liberals tend to rely on an "anti-extremist" approach that condemns both the Radical Left and Far Right in the same breath—for example, comparing fascists and anti-fascists.

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The head of the State and its lackeys may be ousted but there persists the structure of the State and its manifold institutions. A reportback from Tunisia states as much. The revolt against fascism (or a bonafide dictator) must seek to go beyond a sort of purification of the territory. Racism is not just the action of organized white racists, but the perpetuation of a whole system. Obviously, what is not mentioned above is another glaring omission of antifa: a substantive critique of capitalism.

Lastly, antifa bears no real critique of democracy, whether representative or direct. This is mostly due to its lack of politics. This returns to the reality that antifa lies dormant when the status quo, that does not trouble it, rumbles on. As noted in *Dixie Be Damned*, "white supremacy's greatest ally in this country has been democracy, not fascism." Since antifa relies on demonization as part of its mobilization, it could not (and did not) mobilize in any way against the Obama administration. Antifa may have seen Obama as contemptible, but fears of being seen as racist

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All this to say, of course I am against fascism but I am also against many other things. Critiques of these notes will come on like a flood. I may be attacked as not giving the answer to what is to be done now in our current moment. I would contend that the goal is the same (full communism) but because of the upswing of the Right that we will need defensive measures. It would behoove us to make of our defensive measures ones that are also offensive. The Liberals and the Left already are making calls for unity and safety above all, but what has been necessary is to foster antagonisms and the antagonisms have never been as high as they are now. Should we put away our partisan rage now? And on safety: this society has not only failed to keep us safe before Trump, it has

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Today, an understanding of structural racism and how white supremacy is woven into the fabric of the U.S. is essentially a requirement to do this work. If a person with these simplistic views wanted to get involved in antifa circles, we would help them develop a deeper critique before we could closely work with them. Similarly, we can't think of anyone currently in our circles who does not oppose capitalism. In

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Along with renewed interest has also come a flood of commentary by people who seem to consider themselves "experts" on the antifa movement. They are lining up to give us instructions or to criticize us. What's common to them all—whether from good or bad intentions—is that they know very little about the existing movement, and therefore grossly misrepresent it.

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People assure us that "On Antifa" is an honest critique. Of course, we can't say that it doesn't accurately represent the people with whom the author is in contact. What we can say with certainty is that, as three long-term participants in the antifascist milieu, who belong to active antifascist groups (Philly Antifa and NYC Antifa)—and who know hundreds of active anti-fascists, including many currently part of the TORCH Antifa Network, the successor to Anti-Racist Action (ARA) Network, which one of us was in—the picture painted in this essay bears little or no relationship to the national antifascist movement as a whole.

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